Land Acknowledgement Resources

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If you are reading this, you have become interested in what a land acknowledgement is and in creating one for your organization. A land acknowledgement is used to recognize the Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live and work. They are often displayed on websites and in buildings, and said before public events.

A land acknowledgement should be thoughtfully created. An organization might begin by researching the history of its geographic area and understanding the Indigenous people who used to live there and who still call that land home. If you are unclear about the history of your land, consider contacting your local Indigenous communities for guidance.

The Native Governance Center has four key components in creating a land acknowledgement: (described in detail in this handout)

- Start with self-reflection. Why do you want to do this? What is your goal?
- Do your homework. What is the history of the land that you are on?
- Use appropriate language. Do not sugar coat the past.
- Use past, present, and future tenses. Remember that Indigenous people are here and thriving.

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These steps cannot be rushed, and they should not be taken by just one person. In other words, it is best to have a group/committee involved in the creation of a land acknowledgement, and then have drafts reviewed by others in the organization. If you are unsure what to say, you can find many examples online (and there are some on the following pages). As you will see, a land acknowledgement can be short or long, and may contain text that acknowledges other people besides the Indigenous people who call that area home. It is up to the organization to decide what level of detail fits with their intentions.

Moving beyond a land acknowledgement:

A land acknowledgment is a first step and should be followed with actions which put you in allyship with your Indigenous relatives. Many land acknowledgements – after further discussion – include this information. For example, actions might be focused on learning more about the history of the Indigenous people on whose land an organization resides, or taking direct action to support Indigenous people, or participating in the "land back" movement. Note that the action which is correct for your organization may not be correct for another.

The Native Governance Center describes in detail these seven suggestions for moving beyond a land acknowledgement:

- Do a self-assessment. What is your organization already doing?
- Do a resource assessment. What resources could you provide to your Indigenous neighbors?
- Do your research.
- Outline concrete plan steps with specific, measurable actions.
- Go public. Share your plan with others.
- Keep your action plan somewhere handy and review it regularly.
- Reflect on your progress.
- Stay humble.

This is a work in progress:

Once you have written a land acknowledgement, you are not done. Yes, you need to consider what actions your organization will take to support Indigenous people. You also will need to consider if your land acknowledgement needs to be updated. For example, you might review it once a year and determine if it needs to be modified based on what you have learned and the actions your organization is taking.

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Resources

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Sample Land Acknowledgements

These materials are presented as originally published on the organizations' websites and are protected by their copyrights.

Finger Lakes Land Trust (Ithaca, NY), retrieved 0212/2024:
The Finger Lakes Land Trust recognizes that our nature preserves exist on the homeland of the Haudenosaunee. We hope to honor indigenous peoples' ongoing relationship with the land by conserving wild places forever.

Falmouth Public Schools (East Falmouth, MA), retrieved 02/12/2024:
Falmouth Public Schools acknowledges that we are gathering on the unceded ancestral land of the Wôpanâak (Wampanoag) Nation. We recognize and respect the Wampanoag people, including those of Suckanesset, Waquoit, Sippewissett, Tataket, and Chapoquoit as original stewards of what is now known as the Town of Falmouth and honor their enduring relationship with this land. This Land acknowledgment is an intentional act to counter the erasure of indigenous people and to demonstrate respect for their sovereign rights. We are committed to educating ourselves and our students about the longstanding history of the Wampanoag people. In alignment with the core values of the Falmouth Public Schools, we pledge to build an ongoing partnership with the Wampanoag Nation.

Wilfred Laurier University (Canada), retrieved 02/12/2024:
We would like to acknowledge that Wilfrid Laurier University and its campuses are located on the shared traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe (Anish-nah-bay) and Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-no-show-nee) peoples. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe peoples and symbolizes the agreement to share, protect our resources and not to engage in conflict. From the Haldimand Proclamation of Oct. 25, 1784 this territory is described as: "six miles deep from each side of the river (Grand River) beginning at Lake Erie and extending in the proportion to the Head of said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever." The proclamation was signed by the British with their allies, the Six Nations, after the American Revolution. Despite being the largest reserve demographically in Canada, those nations now reside on less than five per cent of this original territory.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria (Canada), retrieved 2/12/2024:
The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria acknowledges with gratitude that we work, play, and pray on the territories and traditional lands of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw Peoples. In the light of this truth, and in humility, we commit ourselves to continue to work for reconciliation, and for respectful relationships with the Creator and all creation.

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University of Maryland, retrieved 02/12/2024:
Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment.

Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations.

St. Joseph Parish and School (Seattle, WA), retrieved 2/12/2024:
St. Joseph Parish and School sits on the traditional and ancestral land of the Coast Salish and Duwamish People, the original inhabitants of what is now known as Seattle and the Puget Sound area. We pay respect to the people of the Coast Salish and Duwamish, past and present, and honor the land itself which remains sacred to the Coast Salish and Duwamish People.

We acknowledge that these peoples, and many others, were forcefully removed from their land, some abducted & sent to boarding schools, and some murdered, often with the implicit and explicit support of the Catholic Church and the Jesuit Order. We acknowledge these sins and recognize that the consequences of these actions continue to affect these Indigenous communities.

As a Jesuit parish, Ignited by the Eucharist to Love and Serve, we know we cannot be faithful to our mission without changing our relationship to the Indigenous peoples of this land. We are committed to supporting the Indigenous members of our community as we educate ourselves (a largely non-Native parish) on Indigenous histories, cultures, and issues. We pledge to build deeper relationships with the Duwamish, Coast Salish, and other Indigenous stewards of this land and to work to repair the injustices of colonization.

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Harana Market (Accord, NY), retrieved 2/12/2024:
We acknowledge that the land on which Harana Market stands is the traditional territory of the Munsee Lenape tribe.

If your family, like ours, is not indigenous to the Munsee Lenape territory, you are a settler, or a guest.

We all must remain accountable to the land and the Munsee Lenape people as beneficiaries of the violence that make it for us to be here.

We acknowledge the earliest inhabitants of the Philippines and the people and culture indigenous to the islands.

We acknowledge and honor the long history of colonization and forced occupation that native Filipinos have experienced by Spain, the United States and Japan.

We acknowledge the intersection of the many identities that Filipino people hold and that a lot of the food known today as “Filipino food” has a long, complex history of Colonization and anti-brownness.

We acknowledge the privileges we hold that have afforded us a lifetime of advantages; including this opportunity to live and own a business in the Hudson Valley.

We acknowledge that this country is built on the emotional and physical labor of Black people. We acknowledge the racist and prejudiced systems that perpetuate within our society that attempt to disenfranchise and disempower Black and Indigenous Americans.

We acknowledge the long line of Transgender humans who sacrificed their safety and comfort in order to progress the rights of Queer and Transgender people.

We acknowledge these things and seek to contribute to a society that is just and equitable for all, especially those in our community most marginalized by the white supremacist ideals and colonial mindset that infiltrate our country and modern society.

Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), retrieved 2/12/2024:
Cornell University is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogo̱hó:nǫ̀ʔ (the Cayuga Nation). The Gayogo̱hó:nǫ̀ʔ are members of the Hodinǫ̀hsǫ́:nih Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign Nations with a historic and contemporary presence on this land. The Confederacy precedes the establishment of Cornell University, New York state, and the United States of America. We acknowledge the painful history of Gayogo̱hó:nǫ̀ʔ dispossession, and honor the ongoing connection of Gayogo̱hó:nǫ̀ʔ people, past and present, to these lands and waters.

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Sisters of Saint Francis (Rochester, MN), retrieved 2/12/2024:
We acknowledge with great respect that the sacred lands of Assisi Heights on which we live and make our home are the cultural and spiritual lands of the Dakota and Ho-Chunk peoples. As Franciscans we honor the lands and creatures as kin. We recognize the Catholic Church's involvement in the unresolved legacy of colonial-settler dominance and the unjust impact of forced assimilation on our Indigenous sisters and brothers. We realize that we share this land between us and commit to live in balance and harmony with Mother Earth and all her beings as we educate ourselves and build genuine relationships that support indigenous sovereignty and help restore justice.

Episcopal Church of Delaware, retrieved 2/12/2024:
The churches, buildings, and properties of the Episcopal Church in Delaware are located on land that was and continues to be home to the Nanticoke and Lenni-Lenape people.
We honor and express gratitude for the native peoples who have inhabited, cultivated, and nourished this land for thousands of years. In paying our respect to their rich and diverse cultures, we acknowledge and lament the violence and systematic oppression inflicted upon indigenous peoples.

We repent of these historic and ongoing sins. With God's help, we will strive for justice and peace among all peoples, and respect the dignity of every human being.

Widerstand Consulting (Turtle Island), retrieved 2/12/2024:
Widerstand Consulting staff reside on the unceded land of the People of Turtle Island (also known as North America), and are scattered from the East to the West across hundreds of miles. The People of Turtle Island continue to steward this land and its waterways since creation. We acknowledge the ongoing history of dispossession, which has sought to disconnect people from the land of their ancestors, and the destruction of the environment that it caused. Our ability to live, work, and enjoy this land is connected to their deep loss. We strive to understand our place within the past, present, and future of this Indigenous land by reflecting on our relationships with the human and other-than-human relatives with whom it is shared. We work to bring the conditions of our Indigenous siblings into the consciousness of those around us as we advocate for a right relationship with them and the land.

Colonization impacted the People of Turtle Island as well as those who were brought to this land against their will. We honor those people, who were forced from their homelands and enslaved on this land, by working towards equity for their descendants as we also work for equity for our Indigenous relatives.

At its founding, and in the organization's bylaws, Widerstand Consulting committed to donating at least fifty percent of all net funds raised to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)-led anti-racism groups. This is a commitment that we continue to uphold and act upon.

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